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ABSTRACT

Sidney P. Marland, Jr., U.S. Commissioner of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, reports on progress made toward the national objective of full educational opportunity for handicapped children by the year 1980. It is explained that during 1971 the Office of Education has attempted to strengthen state, local, and federal partnership. Four national targets for fiscal year 1972 discussed are: 100,000 handicapped children in preschool programs, 250,000 children added to the special education roles, 250,000 children and young adults receiving vocational education in order that they can complete school with marketable skills, self-sufficiency, and increased self-regard, and 17,000 teachers and professional personnel receiving full or part time training needed in reaching the three previous goals. It is clarified that federal money alone cannot meet the objectives, but that federal money is meant to act as a catalyst for state and local programs. It is thought that the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of government are cooperating in improving educational opportunities for handicapped children. (CB)

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EDUCATION OF THE HANDICAPPED: CLOSER TO EQUALITY*

By S. P. Marland, Jr.
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A year ago, at your convention in Miami, Ed Martin made the initial public announcement that full education opportunity for handicapped children had been designated as a national goal of the United States Office of Education. Today, on your 50th Anniversary as an organization dedicated to improving the lives of handicapped boys and girls, I would like to report to you on the progress made toward that objective.

We all recognize that bringing full educational opportunity to the handicapped children of America --- the six million of school age and the one million preschoolers --- is a challenge for this entire Nation. It is not a challenge that the Federal Office of Education alone can assume. It is not a challenge that the local communities can meet using only local resources. It is not a challenge that State governments can cope with by themselves. Our call for the development of a national goal of education for all handicapped children by 1980 was a call for leadership from within the entire education community, a call for the cooperative activity without which we cannot hope to achieve this goal as a total Nation.

During this year, we have attempted to strengthen the State, local, and Federal partnership which has been growing

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over the past decade and to accelerate its progress. Education for the handicapped did not start this year simply because we have given it a new importance in the Office of Education. Your own 50-year engagement in the noble struggle is striking evidence of the long history of concern that many educators and many private citizens and, of course, many parents have felt for the need to develop the abilities of the special child. But I do think there is an important qualitative difference in special education this year. By establishing education of the handicapped as an objective of the Office of Education, all of us in that Office share a sense of concern and involvement in the objective, rather than just our specialists in the education of the handicapped. Specialists in higher education, vocational education, educational research, teacher training, and so forth --- all the members of our family are involved and their involvement, I would say, grows deeper by the day.

If one analyzes the development of educational programming for handicapped children, the credit must be given in large part to groups such as your own --- to teachers and other education professionals who have been advocates for the children they serve. Recognition must also be made of the tremendous contribution that parents have made. They have carried their case to school boards, to State legislatures, and to the United States Congress itself in attempting to develop a public policy

that would be responsive to the needs of handicapped children. The legislative bodies have responded and continue to do so. More recently the Courts have begun to respond as I will discuss in a few minutes. But to be thoroughly honest with you, general educators have not always provided all of the leadership in this area that might have been desirable. This has by no means been universally true, of course. Many principals and local and State superintendents have in a variety of instances aggressively pursued more programming for handicapped children. But impeding these efforts has been the fact that the cost of educating handicapped children is inevitably greater, that there are many and cogent competing needs for funding, and that responsibility for seriously handicapped children has been left largely unassigned. Are they the responsibility of the schools? Or are they the charges of other kinds of social organizations? These factors have produced an uneven pattern of leadership within the education community. It is to this point that I think that I, as Commissioner of Education, and Ed Martin as Associate Commissioner of the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, must attend. We must to the best of our abilities and to the limits of our resources attempt to join with our State and local colleagues in providing leadership toward achieving the goal of full services to handicapped children.

In planning for this objective, we developed four national targets for Fiscal Year 1972: First, 100,000 handicapped children in preschool programs. Second, 250,000 children added to the special education roles. Third, 250,000 children and young adults receiving vocational education in order that they might leave school with marketable skills and a chance for self-sufficiency and increased self-regard. Fourth, 17,000 teachers and professional personnel receiving the full or part-time training that will be necessary in reaching these other goals.

Early Childhood Education

A major focus of our concern has been in stimulating the development of early childhood programs for handicapped children. The research that you and your colleagues have done has suggested that in each area of handicapping conditions early stimulation and training can reduce or eliminate later educational handicaps. The significance of this in human terms --- in the reduction of frustration and failure for children as well as in the amelioration of despair and isolation for parents --- is obvious. And, in addition, there is increasing evidence that such programs are cost-beneficial in that they will reduce costs of later institutionalization or full-time special class placement.

Reports coming to us from our Model Preschool Programs are very encouraging. By the end of this year we will have at least one model program in each State. There is a tremendous

variety in these programs. Some are serving infants in the first year of life, others concentrate on the five and six year olds; some deal with small groups of similarly handicapped children; others work to integrate handicapped into programs with nonhandicapped. There are programs in rural areas, and in inner-cities, some dealing with Spanish-speaking, and some with Indians. There are programs in schools and there are programs in hospitals.

In short, we are attempting to reach into widely varied segments of our population in order to gather from each wisdom in relation to preschool and early childhood training, and to give to each an assist in demonstrating the effectiveness of programming for handicapped children of all kinds. Program after program report gains in children's language and cognitive functioning, reduction of the sort of disruptive behavior that has caused children to be excluded from regular day care and preschool programs, and other well-documented and deeply encouraging improvements. We established the goal of 100,000 children in preschool programming at the end of this year on the basis of several factors: our accelerated efforts, increased efforts on the part of States to use Education of the Handicapped Act and State money for these purposes, a specific effort on our part to stimulate increased participation of handicapped children in programs under Head Start and other authorities, and in general, a full range of catalytic activities including

encouragement and stimulation of new State legislation. It now appears that the Nation will come very close to having 100,000 children in preschool programs in 1972. We are able at this time to account for over 70,000 participating in programs under the Education of the Handicapped Act and Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. And the complete roster of reports will not be available to us until sometime after the school year ends. As professionals in this field you know, as I do, that there is no comprehensive record-keeping system which can account for all the handicapped children in cooperative preschool programs, in privately operated day care and preschool programs across the country. These data simply are not collected systematically by State education agencies. Part of our efforts, then, has been to work cooperatively with the Office of Child Development and other HEW agencies in establishing better records of participation of handicapped children in preschool programming, and there are indications of substantial progress toward this objective. For FY 1973 we have requested an additional $4.5 million for Model Programs which will bring the number supported to 100. Our mutual planning activities with State education agencies and other responsible agencies will continue. For example, we have worked closely with the Governor's office and the Governor's Department of Human Resources in Illinois,

offering support and assistance in the development of a new program in that State requiring preschool education for all handicapped children.

Career Education

Another major Office of Education objective is to accelerate development of the career education concept. In brief, the career education theme calls for a renewal of elementary and secondary curricula to place new emphasis on the variety of career opportunities available to young people Career education would provide information and training in sensible alternative directions that may be pursued, and would provide specific skills training to students so that each would leave public education either with marketable skills or with specific higher education goals, carrying career plans.

The Career Education goal and our Education of the Handicapped goal interact, and this year we have begun by expanding opportunity for vocational education for handicapped children. In 1971, about 115,000 handicapped young people were enrolled in pre-vocation or vocational programming. An analysis from 40 States indicates that over 200,000 children are in programs within those States leading to careers, and it is expected that the goal of 250,000 will be reached this year.

It seems critical to me that the concept of career education takes hold in special education. From the earliest years

curriculum should be developed in terms of do-able goals for productive lives for handicapped children. We cannot afford to let special education programming phase out after elementary school but must carry through with appropriate program for junior high school and high school so that our young people may enter into the world of work or go on to further purposeful study with confidence and competence.

Educational Personnel

We will also meet the manpower target we stipulated. In fact, it will be oversubscribed. In addition to providing partial assistance to more than 20,000 undergraduate, graduate, and Special Institute trainees, we have been able to exceed our goals in terms of new programs established and new models of training under our special projects and programs. Other developments in the manpower area encouraging. Our analyses indicate that more and brighter students are enrolled in special education each year, and that because of the overall manpower supply additional teachers are becoming available for the special education manpower pool. The critical problem which faces us and which faces those of you in the teacher education preparation field is to analyze more carefully the competencies which our teachers need, and to relate the progress that children make in school to the kind of training teachers receive. We must focus on the outcomes of our training process so that our goals can increasingly become qualitative as well

as quantitative.

In attempting to come to terms with a national problem of the magnitude of the one which faces us in developing special education opportunities for all handicapped and gifted children, we proposed the establishment of 1980 as a target date. In a number of States the target date was legally mandated to be earlier than 1980. For some, such legal dates have already passed, unmet. In other States there is no date by which the task must be done. In order to afford additional services for approximately three million children by 1980, the total national effort would have to provide increased opportunity for a quarter of a million children this year and that figure would have to accelerate over the next few years, reaching the level of between 400,000 and 500,000 children per year as the decade ends.

It may be important at this point to reaffirm the meeting of target figures. There has been some confusion about some that I have mentioned. Not long ago one State leader said to us, "Well, you have established this national goal of full services by 1980. When are you going to give us the detailed plan for our State? When are you going to give us the money to do the job?" While that kind of question surprised us, as we have thought about it we can understand where we have failed to communicate clearly the true sense of our objectives and goals. We do not intend to develop from the Federal Office of Education a specific plan to serve all of the children in

Pennsylvania or in Alabama or in Texas. Clearly we do not intend to impose a Federal plan on those States, or assume Federal responsibility for the education of the children in those States. We could not if we wanted to since the Constitution assigns primary responsibility for education to the States. What we do hope to do is to establish a national target, one point in time against which we can, as a Nation, measure our progress. We hope to provide a climate of leadership by affirming the right of handicapped children to an education, and by highlighting this right in the eyes of the public and in the eyes of the education community. We hope to stimulate the establishment in each State of a similar goal, developed by the people of that State, which would be a plan for the use of local, State and Federal resources in that State. At the same time, in developing such a national goal, we naturally hope to develop on the part of the Federal government --- both the Congress and the Executive Branch --- an increased sense of commitment toward this end and an increased share of national resources for these purposes.

We had an alternative. We could have set our goals in terms of just how far the Federal dollars would go. We could, for example, decide to give scholarships to X numbers of teachers. Or help Y numbers of children with Federal funds. Then we could have reached our goals quite easily, since they would match exactly the dollar resources we had available to us. Instead,

we have said that the real meaning of the Federal dollar is not just to do a limited job, but to be a catalyst to the meeting of a national need. The $37.5 million State allocation in Education of the Handicapped Act funds could be spent in this fashion to provide an education for a maximum of 20,000 children at $1,800 per child. But through careful State and local planning in combination with the use of other Federal resources, this same amount could be a catalyst to stimulate better education for hundreds of thousands of children. As you know, we have chosen the latter strategy, and the State directors of special education and the colleges and universities are cooperating with us. They are investing Federal dollars very carefully so as to get the maximum mileage out of them. Programs are supported in areas where there is no State authorization, such as preschool, to demonstrate the value of such programs. Funds are being spent to aid seriously handicapped children --- the multiply handicapped, the emotionally disturbed --- programs for which sufficient State funding and priority have not been available. Funds are being spent to support Instructional Materials Centers and similar kinds of applications of education technology which are not easily supportable under current State program assumptions. Incredibly enough, this year our reports suggest that 90 percent of dollars spent under Part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act, Grants to the

States, was spent for such purposes. Only 10 percent was spent for things that could have easily have been done routinely by the States. So that our goal of 250,000 new children receiving special education then can serve two purposes: First, it can serve as a mark against which the Nation can measure its efforts and help stimulate State goals. Second, it can provide for the parents, children and teachers a method of accountability, a sense of visible stepping stones so that year-to-year progress may be more easily and accurately determined.

A major strategy in developing new education opportunities for handicapped children has been to work cooperatively with other groups. For several years we have supported the CEC activity which has cataloged all State legislation on handicapped children and which has developed a model special education statute. This information resource has been used by a number of States in studying their special education programming.

We also reached out this year to the Education Commission of the States, an organization of governors, State legislators, and professional and lay people interested in education. ECS has adopted as its own goal our 1980 full education opportunity standard. With our support, and with the cooperation of the Council for Exceptional Children, a series of conferences was held around the country in which each State had a chance

to examine its special education program in relation to those of neighboring States and in relation to the model statute. The recommendations from these conferences for improvement of State programs are fed back to legislators, to governors, and to State education officers. An index of the activity in this area is the fact that 899 bills have been introduced in State legislatures this year involving education for handicapped children and 237 have passed, 86 of them regarded as major in scope. Every State with a legislature in session has considered special education legislation. A number of very interesting trends are thus apparent:

(1) there is an accelerating movement toward mandatory legislation;

(2) there is a revamping of testing and diagnostic procedures and a greater concern for due process in identifying and prescribing for children;

(3) there is a general concern for the civil rights of handicapped people;

(4) preschool programming is receiving a great deal of attention;

(5) the definitions of handicapped children are being extended to include categories not previously served such as the trainable mentally retarded;

(6) transportation laws are becoming more flexible;

(7) private schools are getting more help, and regional programs are being established.

Now, of course, we recognize that these efforts are not solely attributable to the CEC legislative study or to the ECS

conferences, but represent in large part the cumulative effect of years of work by parent groups, by professional groups, by State education agencies, and so forth. But it is also true that in situation after situation the legislators or the State special education officials have pointed out to us that these recent activities have moved them much further along. This week, for example, we have learned that the entire model statute was introduced in one State and that another plans to adopt it in toto. We have had direct contact from three governors in addition to numerous contacts with Chief State School Officers.

Most of our catalytic efforts specifically designed to reach our objective of 250,000 children added to the special education programs will not be felt until the next school year. This year we estimate that 215,000 additional children will receive special education services, and next year the 250,000 mark should be reached. This is 35,000 fewer children than we hoped for this year and about 45,000 fewer children than we hoped for next year, so we must either increase our efforts or lower our expectations. I think conditions are favorable, however, for more rapid gains in future years and thus feel that the 1980 goal is entirely within our reach. I think this optimism is warranted because we have seen new responsiveness within HEW and at the State and Federal legislative levels and because the recent Federal court

decisions in Pennsylvania and in Alabama suggest a whole new judicial concern which will provide added stimulation. The Pennsylvania decision says in essence that a child who is mentally retarded, or thought to be by school officials or his parents or guardian, cannot be denied admission to school or have his educational status changed without notice and a chance for a due process hearing. And that by September 1, 1972 every retarded person between the ages of 6 and 21 must have access to a free public program of education and training appropriate to his learning capabilities. Furthermore, if any of the schools in the State provide a program for children younger than six they must also provide appropriate programs for retarded children. The larger message is clear: handicapped children are entitled to public education.

In the Alabama case, Federal Judge Frank Johnson ordered State officials to correct conditions at the Partlow State School and Hospital at Tuscaloosa which is for retarded children. Judge Johnson entered an interim order to correct immediately such things as fire hazards and unhealthful food and to begin a disease immunization program, and also ordered the hiring of 300 staff people by March 31, and this has already been done. According to observers, this is the first time that a Court has held that a mentally retarded person, involuntarily confined to an institution, has a right to adequate treatment and care.

These court decisions are exciting and encouraging and they bring us to a point in time where all the great arms of our Government --- the judicial, the legislative, and the executive --- are increasing their concern for the handicapped person and for his intrinsic rights as a human being. As educators, our responsibilities are not reduced because of this legislative and judicial concern. We know that handicapped children should have an education. We know that education for handicapped children works. We know that preschool programming can positively effect the growth and development of the handicapped child physically, emotionally, and cognitively. We know that given appropriate career education, handicapped children can be employed and we know that if we do our job well 90 percent or more of handicapped people can be partially or fully self-sufficient. We know that handicapped people can participate in higher education and in adult and continuing education. And it is clearly our responsibility to take the leadership in planning such programs, in demonstrating their effectiveness, and in providing equal educational opportunity.

When we made education of the handicapped a priority of the Office of Education it was not a one-year enthusiasm, as it is not a one-year enthusiasm for us to become interested in the gifted and talented children and to establish an Office of Gifted and Children.

Providing appropriate educational opportunity for handicapped and gifted children demands a long-term effort, presupposes a continuing priority, and obviously requires unremitting efforts to focus public attention and public resources on these children.

We intend this year and in the future years to continue our efforts to provide national leadership in special education. We will talk with the Chief State School Officers, we will enlist support from the school boards, we will present our case to the Secretary and to the Office of Management and Budget. I can assure you that it will not be an effort limited only to our Bureau of Handicapped Children and our program for the gifted and talented, but it will be an undertaking woven into the very fabric of the entire Office of Education and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. In fact, we are already launching cooperative activities with the National Institute of Mental Health, the Office of Child Development, and the Social and Rehabilitation Service so that we can integrate all our resources more effectively to serve children.

In closing I would like to quote Dr. Larry G. Stewart, associate director of the New York University Deafness Research and Training Center. Dr. Stewart, who is himself deaf, refers to America's deaf as a truly silent minority but one which is growing restless "under the yoke of centuries-old discrimination and denial of their right as Americans to equal treatment under the law."

"The patience of the silent minority is growing thin," Dr. Stewart writes. "How much longer" he asks, "must they wait for the freedom, justice, and equality promised to all Americans?"

The same might well be asked about all of our people who are somehow out of the ordinary, whether their differences are due to handicaps of mind or body, extraordinary mental gifts, social or economic disadvantagement, or race. For the patience of all these special Americans is growing thin.

But we can say today that education at all levels is beginning to respond to their legitimate claims and, as I hope the steps I have outlined to you tonight indicate, the Federal Government is beginning to move with accelerating effectiveness to meet the special needs of the handicapped and the gifted. It has been a long and difficult struggle for you of the Council --- 50 years long. But your message is beginning to be heard throughout America and I would say that as a result the educational prospects of millions of special children were never brighter.

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